

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP  
New War Department Building  
Washington 25, D.C.  
7 July 1947

Country: Germany (Russian Zone)  
Subject: Soviet Use of Buchenwald Concentration Camp

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1. [REDACTED]
2. The Buchenwald camp was surrounded in depth by three rings of buildings. The outer ring was occupied by 400 "Red" MVD troops charged with the arrest and search of prisoners. The center ring housed "Black" MVD troops who acted as guards, work supervisors and patrolmen; strength of these troops was approximately 400 men. The inner ring contained "Interior Sector (IS)" MVD personnel, who handled top level matters, including the interrogation and ultimate disposal of prisoners.

25X1 [REDACTED] Comment: The color designations quoted above are commonly used throughout the Russian Zone, [REDACTED] although they are not official terms. "Red" troops wore grey-green uniforms with red shoulder tabs. "Black" troops were garbed in dark green with black tabs. "IS" personnel were dressed in blue green with light blue tabs, with a light blue trouser stripe and a light blue ring around each sleeve and the cap crown.

3. The camp consisted of fifty-three buildings known as "blocks". Fifteen of them were stone buildings; the rest were of wooden construction. Each block housed one battalion of prisoners (approximately 600 persons), subdivided into four companies for stone "blocks" and two for wooden "blocks". Companies were similarly divided into platoons.

4. In January 1946, Buchenwald contained twenty-six of these battalions. Fourteen of them, consisting exclusively of persons from Thuringia, formed Regiment No. 1. The remaining twelve battalions, composed of people from the Berlin area, formed Regiment No. 2. [REDACTED] from January to September 1946, the two regiments had a strength of 12,000 to 15,000 prisoners. In addition to this total, there were two female battalions occupying blocks 40 and 41, and approximately 1,000 minors lodged in blocks 44, 45, and 46.

#### Personalities

5. The following MVD personalities were connected with the Buchenwald camp:

Colonel Petrov, chief of the camp and troops.

Lieutenant Colonel Bolobenko, deputy for Petrov.

Major Bastleshenkov, camp co. mander.

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Lieutenant Antoniev, adjutant.Captain Kagsakov, supply officer.Captain Medasov, legal officer.S/Sgt Feuermann, chief interpreter.Captain Karajevyev, a hospital staff doctor.

6. The following Russian and German prisoners held responsible positions in the camp:

"Alexander", Russian civilian; staff director.Gottlieb Portofei, Erfurt resident of Baltic origin; spoke fluent Russian; became staff director after "Alexander's" removal in March 1946.Walter Berdt, of Gaberndorf, near Weimar; directed Regiment No. 1 after March 1946.Alfred Schmidt, of Erfurt; kitchen chief.

Fritz Hauck ) Both from Hermsdorf and both  
Fritz Sossath ) in charge of supplies.

(fnu) Bauer, of Erfurt; director of shop work.(fnu) Ortlepp, of Weimar; chief of the auto repair shop.

7. Until March 1946, the Buchenwald camp was run by Soviet DP's who had been seized and imprisoned by the Russians. "Alexander", the staff director, controlled two Ukrainians, leaders of the two regiments, and four other Russian civilian prisoners. This staff of seven ran the labor office, supply rooms, and other departments and issued orders to the other prisoners. During this period, the camp strength included approximately 150 Russian prisoners, who were used as interpreters, hospital attendants, labor supervisors, etc. All these people were shipped to the USSR in March 1946, at which time German inmates took over the administrative duties.

Prisoners

8. The majority of Buchenwald inmates were former Nazi party members. An estimated ten to twelve percent were SPD and KPD men. The slightly larger percentage of SPD men consisted of those who had opposed, or had been accused of opposing, the SPD-KPD merger; the KPD personalities were those considered to be saboteurs by omission or commission, e.g., Bürgermeisters who had failed in their duties. Women prisoners were chiefly former officials or members of Nazi organizations. The adolescent internees were accused of Werewolf activities.
9. Prisoners attached to Regiment No. 2 were in great part members of the Berlin intelligentsia: Kammergerichtsräte, other judges, government officials and employees, industrialists, artists, journalists, etc. Some of them were accused of having been members of various Nazi groups. Most of them [redacted] were not accused of anything at all. Before internment at Buchenwald, these Berliners had been in Sachsenhausen, Posen, Landsberg, Schneidemühl and other concentration camps. According to reliable accounts, approximately 2,000 of them had died from disease and exhaustion in the process of being shipped around from one camp to another.

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10. Among other nationals detained at Buchenwald were de Berkelaar, a Flemish writer; de Latrie, a Swiss consular official; and Haberland, who claimed to be a Paraguayan consul. Between March and June 1946, the camp contained six prisoners who were stripped of their American uniforms, given prison clothing and immediately assigned to the punitive battalion, [redacted]

[redacted] other inmates, who had conversations with them, maintained that they were American soldiers who had been seized in the Russian Zone.

#### Camp Routine

11. Reveille sounded every morning at 0545 hours. Each block (approximately 600 persons to each) had fifteen minutes to wash at fifty water outlets, without soap or towels, before falling out. Breakfast at 0600 consisted of one liter of water and barley soup. One hour was allowed for the distribution and consumption of food. At 0700 workers proceeded to their tasks, while other prisoners returned to their blocks. Lunch, consisting of the same soup, was issued from 1200 to 1400, after which work went on until 1600 hours. Supper, distributed at 1700, consisted of 400 grams of bread. On Sundays and holidays, the bread ration was decreased.
12. Three roll calls were made each day at unspecified times in the morning, during the lunch period, and after 1600 hours. During the first two roll calls, each block was required to report the number of prisoners sick and at work. The evening call was a general one which everyone but those hospitalized had to attend. If the number of prisoners present did not agree with the Russian figures, the call would be repeated again and again, with the sick from the hospital being brought out on stretchers. A normal call of this type took four hours but occasionally ran as long as eight or ten hours.

#### Labor

13. The prisoners regarded assignment to a labor battalion as a great favor. Only twenty-five percent of the inmates succeeded in obtaining such work. The workers were divided into three categories:
- A: Up to 35 years, for heavy labor such as road improvement, quarrying, forestry, and coal heaving.
  - B: From 35 to 45, for camp shops, repairs, baking, kitchen, etc. Most of the camp shops worked exclusively for the Soviet troops.
  - C: 45 to 60, for sewing, cleaning the camp grounds, etc.

#### Restrictions

14. Those not assigned to labor were not allowed to engage in any activity whatsoever. Educational, cultural, or other pastimes were strictly forbidden. All blocks were isolated from each other by fences and inmates of one block were not permitted to mix with inmates of another. They were confined to the block unless called out. Use of the camp streets was forbidden. All prisoners were held incommunicado. They could not correspond with relatives, receive letters or visitors. Anyone found in possession of writing paper, pencils, or pens was heavily punished. As a result of this confinement, rumors flourished on a fantastic scale, [redacted] one of the preferred rumors was that the Americans would take over Buchenwald and release everyone.

#### Punishments

15. [redacted] beatings and maltreatment were frequent, [redacted]

The normal routine of punishments was as follows:

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a. Light infractions caused transfer to the punitive battalion whose permanent strength consisted of 200 to 250 men. Those in it were deprived of food for a certain number of days, could not contact anyone else, and were forbidden to talk for specific periods.

25X1 b. Transfer to the German bunker meant that the prisoner was forbidden to  
talk, deprived of food for long periods, and had to sleep on the floor with-  
out covers. The average term of imprisonment was fifty days. During [redacted]  
25X1 stay, six cases of insanity occurred as a result of incarceration in this  
bunker.

c. Transfer to the Russian bunker was applied to prisoners who would not con-  
fess to accusations brought against them during MVD interrogations. This  
25X1 bunker was even dirtier than the German one; cleaning of the bunker was for-  
bidden and prisoners were not allowed to remove their excrement for periods  
25X1 up to two weeks. [redacted] a number of deaths and cases of insanity  
occurred among those sentenced to this bunker.

d. Deportation to Russia was meted out to approximately 100 prisoners [redacted]  
25X1 [redacted] This sentence had to be delivered by Captain  
25X1 Medasov, the legal officer.

#### Hygienic Conditions

16. The camp was generally dirty and the blocks were filled with vermin. Prisoners brought to the camp were deprived of all their personal belongings and were issued clothing taken from dead inmates. The requisitioned clothing was stored in the supply room and periodically shipped to the USSR.

17. The lack of soap and the lack of washing facilities, except for fifteen minutes each morning, contributed to the spreading of disease.

18. Each company had one prisoner-barber. Lack of disinfecting agents for the instruments spread syphilis and many men let their beards grow. After a certain time, however, beards were forbidden.

19. One prisoner-doctor was assigned to every four blocks. He could recommend transfer of sick prisoners to the hospital, but approval had to be given by Captain Karajev. The hospital's 600 beds were always occupied during  
25X1 sources's imprisonment. The main diseases among the inmates were typhus,  
25X1 tuberculosis, dysentery, and skin maladies. Hospital patients were subject  
to strict discipline of a military type and infractions were punished by  
transfer to the isolation ward. [redacted]

[redacted] The  
25X1 average daily number of deaths in the hospital was approximately fifteen.  
25X1 The highest number known [redacted] was thirty-six in one day during the  
winter of 1945-46. Most of these deaths were due to pneumonia,

20. Inmates who died were buried within the camp after being stripped of all clothing. For a time, the bodies were placed in paper bags and covered with lime and earth. The use of paper bags was then discontinued.

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